

BAKERY, CONFECTIONERY, TOBACCO WORKERS AND GRAIN MILLERS INTERNATIONAL UNION

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**SAFE
JOBS
SAVE
LIVES**



WORKERS MEMORIAL DAY • APRIL 28



the PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

INCOME INEQUALITY

Taking Toll on Working Families

Corporate CEO's take home tens of millions of dollars a year and the children of working families in the heartland of America need food assistance. This jolting disparity speaks volumes about the economic and social condition of our nation. Left unchecked, the growing income gap between the wealthy and working families will result in greater and greater human hardship that will keep tearing at the social fabric of our country.

Income inequality is not simply the product of free market forces, as apologists in the corporate boardrooms would have us believe, or the result of an inferior and undeserving workforce, as right-wing, multimillionaire media personalities contend.

In fact, the enormous income inequality we are experiencing is largely derived from three developments: 30 years of federal tax policies that are severely skewed to benefit the wealthiest individuals and largest multinational corporations; low-wage economic policies; and a relentless and coordinated attack on the right of workers to organize and bargain collectively perpetrated by the hard core anti-union element of corporate America led and funded by the National Right to Work (For Less) Committee and far-right billionaire industrialists such as the Koch brothers.

While corporate profits and executive compensation have reached exorbitant levels, incomes for working families have not nearly kept pace. A low-wage economic strategy with "free trade" agreements such as NAFTA and CAFTA as its centerpiece has helped stunt wage growth as U.S. corporations have pitted workers in low-wage countries against American workers, primarily organized industrial workers. The BCTGM has experienced this situation time and time again in our industries.

At the same time, union-busting consultants have been taking full advantage of pathetically weak federal labor laws and an understaffed and underfunded National Labor Relations Board to intimidate, harass and coerce workers on behalf of their corporate clients. This has created an environment in which organizing through the Board process is more difficult than at any time since the passage of the National Labor Relations Act in 1935.

On top of this, these same anti-union forces have come together in states across the country spending tens of millions of dollars to enact "right-to-work for less" laws and laws limiting collective bargaining with the goal of depriving workers of the ability to improve their economic standing.

This decades-long assault on labor has led to a

**"MARKET GAINS PUMP CEO PAY –
Corporate chiefs pull in \$50 million or more"**

—USA Today, 3/21/13

**"Last year I attended a Thanksgiving dinner
at Harris Elementary School...in Decatur (IL),
where I learned that 92 percent of the kids are
on free or reduced-cost lunches."**

—Howard G. Buffett, leading advocate for
U.S. and global hunger relief and son of
Warren Buffett, USA Today, 12/2/12

precipitous decline in union density and in turn a decline in the power of unions to raise wages and living standards for members and non-members alike. There is another course that offers a future with greater prosperity for more Americans.

Labor's plan calls for discarding the failed low-wage strategy that has been pounding working families for far too long and replacing it with a high-wage strategy that: puts people back to

work through massive public investment in education, new technology and infrastructure improvements; restructures the federal tax code so that the wealthiest pay their fair share, corporations are not rewarded for shipping good jobs overseas and working families are not left shouldering the tax burden; replaces "free trade" with "fair trade"; and restores workers' ability to organize and bargain collectively by fundamentally reforming the nation's labor laws.

The BCTGM is committed to being an active partner with the AFL-CIO and its affiliates and allies on this critical mission of creating an American economy that works for the middle class. We make this commitment for the well-being of our members and their families for generations to come.

David B. Durkee
BCTGM International President





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SAFEWAY

The Quintessential Community Bakery

BCTGM represented bakers can be found in Safeway bakeries from coast to coast. From intricately decorated cakes for every special occasion, to delectable fruit pies and gourmet cookies, the union bakers take pride in the products they provide.

Featured on this page are the dedicated and proud bakers of Local 85 (Sacramento, Calif.) in Safeway bakeries in Fairfield and Sacramento, California.



Kristopher Brady (left) and Kent Costa (right) move bread into the proof box.

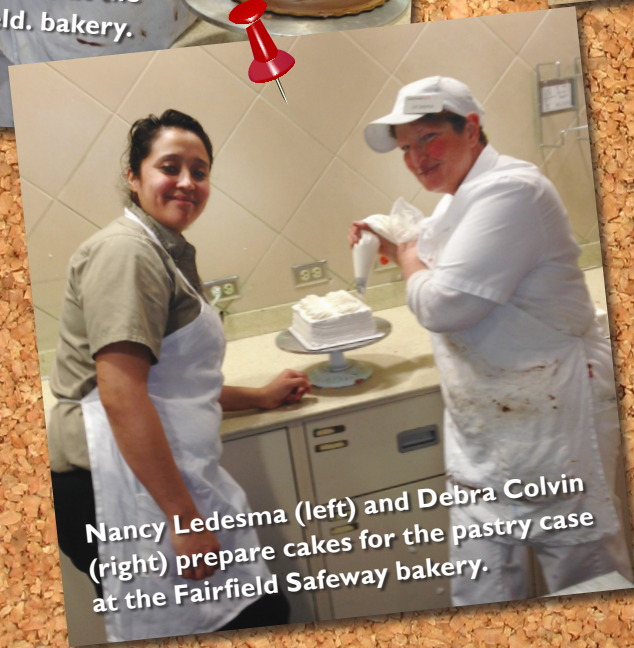
Alla Protsyuk completes a birthday cake at the Sacramento bakery.



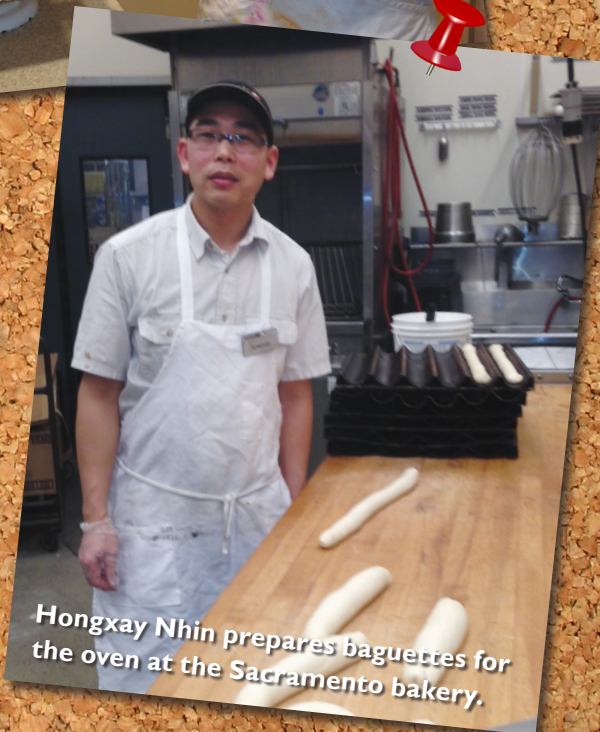
Debra Colvin decorates a special order cake at the Fairfield bakery.



Nancy Ledesma (left) and Debra Colvin (right) prepare cakes for the pastry case at the Fairfield Safeway bakery.



Hongxay Nhin prepares baguettes for the oven at the Sacramento bakery.





The BCTGM Supports COMPREHENSIVE Immigration Reform

In 2009, after consultation with faith and community leaders, the labor movement came together in support of a framework for immigration reform that reflects our shared values: dignity, fairness, opportunity, voice and justice.

The BCTGM supports and is following the lead of the AFL-CIO on immigration reform, beginning with the basic framework of the principles that the policy should be based on. This framework is based on the simple idea that working people are strongest when we work together and the labor movement is strongest when we are open to all workers, regardless of where they come from. It advocates for keeping families together, creating a road map to citizenship and halting the race to the bottom in wages and worker standards by employers who are taking advantage of our failures in immigration policy.

The framework proposes a data-driven approach to immigration that would

determine future visas based on labor market needs, as well as the improvement—not expansion—of guest worker visa programs that too often deny basic civil rights to immigrant workers. The framework also recognizes that a new immigration system must include rational operational control of our borders supplemented by effective work authorization mechanisms that hold employers accountable.

The BCTGM and the AFL-CIO believe that immigration reform should focus on improving productivity and quality; limiting wage competition; strengthen labor standards, especially the right of workers to organize and bargain collectively; and provide social safety nets and high-quality education and training for workers and their families. To achieve this goal, immigration reform must fully protect U.S. workers, reduce the exploitation of immigrant workers and reduce employers' incentive to hire undocumented workers rather than U.S. workers.

The most effective way to do this is for all workers – immigrant and native-born – to have full and complete access to the protection of labor, health and safety and other laws. Comprehensive immigration reform must complement a strong, well-resourced and effective labor standards enforcement initiative that prioritizes workers' rights and workplace protections. This approach will ensure that immigration does not depress wages and working conditions or encourage marginal low-wage industries that depend heavily on substandard wages, benefits and working conditions.

Organized labor strongly supports reform that includes a road map to citizenship for aspiring Americans who love this country and call it home. We remain committed to working together with one voice, along with our civil rights, faith and community partners, to pass fundamental reform that encompasses these principles.

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REASONS ALL workers BENEFIT from FIXING the Immigration SYSTEM

- ▶ **Workers' rights** — including the right to join a union —will be strengthened.
- ▶ **More jobs** will be created.
- ▶ The entire U.S. **economy will grow.**
- ▶ Workplaces will become **safer.**
- ▶ **Wages will rise** for both immigrant and native workers
- ▶ **Added tax revenues** from new jobs and **higher wages** will help local communities and states maintain and improve public services, including education.
- ▶ The **billions of dollars a year in wage theft** for both aspiring citizens and native workers will be significantly reduced.
- ▶ **“High Road” employers** who obey the law and treat workers with respect **will no longer be at a competitive disadvantage.**
- ▶ A healthy immigration system **promotes economic opportunity and social justice** for all workers.

Meet the **NEW** GEB Members

Terry Lansing, BCTGM Local 114 (Portland, Ore.) Financial Secretary, has been a union activist for 45 years. He landed his first union job as a janitor in the surgery and mental health department at Marin General Hospital in San Francisco in 1968.

Lansing got his first bakery job in Emeryville, Calif. at the Doughnut Corporation of America in 1972, where he worked until the company closed in 1974. He moved his family to Oregon and went to work at a non-union Smith Baking Company in Salem, Ore. where in

1975, he led an organizing drive for workers to join Bakers Union Local 114. The organizing effort never led to an election and the company closed in 1976. But the union was in his blood and he was able to get a good union job at the Williams Bakery in Eugene, Ore. and

become a member of Local 114 in July 1976.

At Williams Bakery, in 1980 Lansing was elected a shop steward and later as primary shop steward. In the mid-1980s, Lansing was elected to the Bakers Local 114 Executive Board where he also served as recording secretary and trustee for the local union.

In 1990, Lansing was hired as assistant business agent to help “organize rapidly growing retail bakeries.” In 1991, he was elected as business agent for the retail sector of Local 114. From 1992 to 2005, he worked closely with former Local 114 Secretary Treasurer Laurel Koch and other officers to “transform the local from a service model to an organizing model with the goal of organizing more workers.”

Durkee Appoints Schmidt as Region Three International Representative

BCTGM International President David B. Durkee is pleased to announce the appointment of Brad Schmidt as a Region Three International Representative.

Schmidt, the former Financial Secretary/Business Agent of Local 218 (Kansas City, Mo.), has been a member of the union for 40 years.

Schmidt, 59, is a native of Topeka, Kansas. He went to work at Frito-Lay in Topeka in November 1972. Schmidt was instrumental in organizing his fellow Frito-Lay workers into the union in 1973. He served as shop steward from 1973 to 1977 and chief steward at the Frito-Lay plant from 1977 to 1985. He was elected to be the principal officer of BCTGM Local 218 in 1985, a position he held until April 1 when he assumed the job of International Representative.

Schmidt has served as the Vice President of the BCTGM Candy, Pasta, and Snack Foods Council from 1998 to present. He has been the Financial Secretary-Treasurer of the Third Region Council since 2006.

Schmidt has served on the Local 218 negotiating committee for every Frito-Lay contract since he helped organize the plant 40 years ago – a total of 13 collective bargaining agreements. He also negotiated many other contracts for Local 218 members at Hostess Brands, Archer Daniels Midland, Safeway, Cargill, Earthgrains and more.

Schmidt was elected to the BCTGM's General Executive Board in September 1999. He has served on committees at the union's Constitutional Conventions in 2002 (Committee on Organizing), 2006 (Committee on Resolutions) and 2010 (Committee on Resolutions).

“We are very proud to welcome Brad to our International staff,” says Durkee. “His history of hard work and dedication to workers and this union will undoubtedly benefit the union members of Region Three. He is a skilled arbitrator, negotiator and knowledgeable organizer and his dedication to this union is reflected in all that he accomplishes.”



Lansing was elected as Secretary Treasurer in 2005, a position he continues to hold.

Paula Steig,

BCTGM Local 433 (Sioux City, Iowa) President, is a native of Sioux City, Iowa. After working for 15 years for Kmart ordering merchandise and watching her benefits slowly diminish, she decided to leave that position and look for a better job. In 1994, she went to work at Interbake Foods in North Sioux City, South Dakota where she became a member of BCTGM Local 433.

Both of Steig's parents had worked union jobs at Johnson Biscuit Company, which later became Interbake Foods. Her father had worked at the bakery for 15 years and her mother worked there for 33 and retired in 1992. Both parents stressed the importance of being a member of the union, and Steig set out to learn all she could about what being a union member would do for her

by reading the collective bargaining contract. "It was then that I realized why people should be part of a union. Everything that is bargained for in that contract is protected," recalls Steig.

In 2002, Steig became the union steward for the 11 p.m. to 7 a.m. shift. In 2003, she was elected to the steward/executive board member position of Local 433. In 2006, she was elected as chairperson/executive board member. In 2008, Steig was elected by the Local 433 Executive Board to serve as the president/business agent, a position she continues to hold.

William Shadbolt,

President of Local 550 (Lachine, Quebec), has been a union member for 32 years. He served in the Canadian Armed Forces as a weapons technician from 1973 to 1978 and was stationed in Montreal

and Valcartier, Quebec; Ismailia, Egypt; and, Lars, Germany.

After his military service, Shadbolt worked as a machine press operator at Kenebec, a non-union factory in Cambridge, Ontario. Realizing he needed more benefits and the protection of a union contract, in 1981 Shadbolt went to work for Humpty Dumpty Chips in Lachine, Quebec, now known as Old Dutch Foods, where he continues to work while representing his members.

Shadbolt served more than 20 years as a corn operator and more than five years as a potato chip cook. He was first elected as a union steward on the day shift in 1997, and in 1998, Shadbolt was elected as the Local 550 Vice President. Later that year he was elected President of Local 550, a position to which he has been subsequently re-elected in 2001, 2005, 2009, and 2013. In 2011 he was elected to the BCTGM Canadian Council as a representative for Quebec.

Changes in the General Executive Board

During the 88th session of the General Executive Board (GEB) held in San Francisco on March 21-25, the following changes were made by the GEB:

- ▶ Terry Lansing, Financial Secretary of BCTGM Local 114 (Portland, Ore.), was elected to the GEB to fill the position in Region Six vacated by Donna Scarano, President of BCTGM Local 125 (Oakland, Calif.), who resigned from the GEB on March 25.
- ▶ William Shadbolt, President of BCTGM Local 550 (Lachine, Quebec), was elected to fill the vacancy as General Executive Board member in Region Five. Shadbolt was sworn into his position as GEB member during the session.
- ▶ Paula Steig, President of BCTGM Local 433 (Sioux City, Iowa), was elected to fill the position in Region Three vacated by Brad Schmidt, who resigned from the GEB to become a BCTGM International Representative effective April 1.
- ▶ Barry Jenkins, former President of BCTGM Local 317T (Greensboro, N.C.), resigned as the GEB member from Region Four, Tobacco.



During the 88th session of the BCTGM General Executive Board (GEB) in San Francisco March 21-25, the GEB elected Local 550 (Lachine, Quebec) President William Shadbolt to fill the vacancy in Region Five. Pictured above, BCTGM International President David B. Durkee (right) administers the Oath of Office to Shadbolt (left) during the spring meeting.

SAFE JOBS SAVE LIVES



Workers Memorial Day • April 28

Four decades ago, Congress passed the Occupational Safety and Health Act, promising every worker the right to a safe job. Unions and our allies have fought hard to make that promise a reality—winning protections that have made jobs safer, saved hundreds of thousands of lives and prevented millions of workplace injuries and illnesses.

But our work is not done. Many job hazards are unregulated and uncontrolled. Some employers cut corners and violate the law, putting workers in serious danger and costing lives. Workers who report job hazards or job injuries are fired or disciplined. Employers contract out dangerous work to try to avoid responsibility. As a result, each year thousands of workers are killed and millions more injured or diseased because of their jobs.

The Obama Administration has moved forward to strengthen protections with tougher enforcement and a focus on workers' rights. But much-needed safeguards on silica and other workplace hazards have stalled in the face of fierce attacks by business groups and the Republican majority in the U.S. House of Representatives who want to stop new protections.

On April 28, the unions of the AFL-CIO observe Workers Memorial Day to remember those

who have suffered and died on the job and to renew the fight for safe workplaces.

This year we will come together to call for good jobs in this country that are safe and healthy. We will seek stronger safeguards to prevent injuries and

save lives. We will stand for the right of all workers to raise job safety concerns without fear of retaliation, and for the freedom to form unions and speak out and bargain for respect and a better future. Please join us and make your voice heard.

Decades of struggle by workers and their unions have resulted in significant improvements in working conditions. But progress is threatened as employers seek to cut corners and shirk responsibility and business opponents try to block needed safeguards and stronger workers' rights. It is time to organize, take action and speak out for safe jobs for workers, including:

- ▶ Defending safety and health protections and workers' rights from industry attacks.
- ▶ Requiring employers to find and fix hazards and implement a worksite safety and health program, with full worker participation, to prevent injuries, illnesses and deaths.
- ▶ Winning new workplace safeguards for silica, combustible dust and infectious diseases.
- ▶ Prohibiting employer policies and practices that discourage reporting of workplace injuries.
- ▶ Passing the Protecting America's Workers Act to provide OSHA protection for all workers who lack protection, stronger criminal and civil penalties for companies that seriously violate job safety laws and improved anti-retaliation protections for workers who raise job safety concerns.
- ▶ Ensuring workers' right to have a voice on the job, and to freely choose to join a union without employer interference or intimidation.
- ▶ Increasing attention to the safety and health of Latino and immigrant workers who are at much greater risk of death and injury.

Protecting America's Workers Act

a "Long-Overdue" Update to OSH Act

Forty-two years have passed since the Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Act was signed into law. Now, Senator Patty Murray (D-Wash.) has reintroduced the **Protecting America's Workers Act** (PAWA) (S. 665) in an effort to strengthen the nation's occupational safety protections. She calls the legislation "a long-overdue update to the OSH Act, and a good step towards making workplaces safer and healthier across America."

PAWA works to address workplace injuries, illnesses and deaths. Specifically, PAWA would expand OSH Act protections to include state, county, municipal and U.S. government employees; increase whistleblower protections; and improve OSHA reporting, inspection and enforcement. These improvements will help OSHA ensure safe and healthful work environments in industries that have outpaced decades old government regulation, Murray says.

In addition, the current version of PAWA would require a minimum penalty of \$50,000 for a worker's death caused by a willful violation, and would make felony charges available for an employer's repeated and willful violations of the OSH Act that results in a worker's death or serious injury.

The most significant changes would be increasing

the statute of limitations period from 30 days to 180 days for filing a complaint with the U.S. Department of Labor and providing a private right of action to all complainants. It would further mandate that the Department of Labor (DOL) investigate all death or serious injury cases and would require that employers inform workers of their rights under the OSH Act. The bill

would also give workers and their families a right to meet with DOL investigators.

"Every worker, in every industry, deserves to be confident that while they are working hard and doing their jobs, their employers are doing everything they can to protect them," notes Murray. "That is why I am so proud to reintroduce the Protecting America's Workers Act."

According to Murray, PAWA:

- ▶ **Covers more workers.** More than 8.5 million American workers are not covered by OSHA's protections.
- ▶ **Increases penalties for those who break the law.** Under current law, an employer may be charged – at most – with a misdemeanor when a willful violation of OSHA leads to a worker's death. The bill makes felony charges available for an employer's repeated and willful violations of OSHA that result in a worker's death or serious injury. It also updates OSHA civil penalties and sets a minimum penalty of \$50,000 for a worker's death caused by a willful violation.
- ▶ **Protects whistleblowers who report unsafe workplace conditions.** OSHA whistleblower provisions have not been updated since their adoption in 1970; this bill updates those protections by incorporating successful administrative procedures.
- ▶ **Enhances the public's right to know about safety violations.** The bill improves public accountability and transparency by mandating DOL to investigate all cases of death or serious incidents of injury, requiring employers to inform workers of their OSHA rights and more.
- ▶ **Clarifies an employer's duty to provide a safe worksite.** It amends the General Duty Clause to include all workers on the site and clarifies employer responsibility to provide necessary safety equipment. It also directs the DOL to revise regulations for site-controlling employers to keep a site log for all recordable injuries and illnesses among all employees on the work site.

The **Protecting America's Workers Act** was sponsored by the late Sen. Ted Kennedy in previous Congresses, and has the support of the AFL-CIO. Original Senate co-sponsors of this legislation include Senators Sherrod Brown (D-Ohio), Al Franken (D-Minn.), Tom Harkin (D-Iowa), Frank Lautenberg (D-N.J.), Jay Rockefeller (D-W.Va.), Jeanne Shaheen (D-N.H.), Sheldon Whitehouse (D-R.I.), Bob Casey (D-Pa.), Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.), and Ben Cardin (D-Md.).

Coast to Coast BCTGM Locals

From candy workers in Chicago to dairy workers in Virginia and ice cream cake producers in Los Angeles, BCTGM local unions have negotiated contracts that benefit the membership.

BCTGM Negotiators, at both the local and International levels, continue to preserve the BCTGM's reputation for bargaining exceptional collective agreements, even in the face of daunting challenges.

Local 37 Reaches Agreement with Jon Donaire

In late March, members of Local 37 (Los Angeles) employed at the Jon Donaire Busch facility in Sante Fe Springs, Calif. overwhelmingly ratified a new three year agreement.

The new agreement, which covers over 120 workers at the facility, includes a signing bonus, wage increases, maintenance of health benefits, a shoe allowance, and new language pertaining to labor/management meetings, vacations,

attendance and uniforms. The negotiating committee, led by International Representative Marco Mendoza, included Local 37 President Felipe Lopez, Business Agent Jose Hernandez and members Georgina Lizarraga and Armando Lopez.

Jon Donaire Busch is a subsidiary of Rich Food Products and makes cream cakes under the Jon Donaire label.

Local 1 Negotiates Sweet Deals

Chicago has always been known as the Candy Capital of the World, and BCTGM Local 1 ensures that those sweet confections are made by BCTGM members. To that end, the local recently negotiated new contracts for its members at Tootsie Roll and Nestlé USA.

BCTGM Local 1 members at the Nestlé facility in Franklin Park, Ill., a suburb of Chicago, ratified a new two-year agreement that features wage increases, an increase in pension benefits, language improvements, and union education leave.

Local 1 members produce the Baby Ruth, Butterfinger, BB's and Pearson's Nips at the Franklin Park plant.

Led by International Vice President Jethro Head, the negotiating committee included Local 1 President Donald Woods, and members Rochelle Ross, Ann Jemison, Doris Brown and Omar Ceballos.

BCTGM Local 1 also negotiated a new five-year agreement for members employed at the Tootsie Roll facility in Chicago. The new contract includes wage increases, an increase in disability benefits and life insurance, wage adjustments for certain classifications, and language changes.

More than 400 Local 1 BCTGM members at the Chicago plant produce all varieties of Tootsie Roll brand candies, including all flavors of Tootsie Pops and DOTs.

The union negotiating committee was led by International Vice President Jethro Head and included Local 1 President Donald Woods, and members Rochelle Ross, Angel Ochoa, Matt Pilny, Theresa Sanchez, James Sterling and Art Martinez. Local 1 has represented workers at Tootsie Roll since 1969.

Ratify New Contracts

Land-O-Sun Members Ratify 2nd Contract

In 2009, workers at the Land-O-Sun dairy in Richmond, Va. voted to join BCTGM Local 358. Following that vote, the new members negotiated and subsequently ratified their first collective bargaining agreement with the company. For many of these workers, it was the first time they had worked under the protection of a union contract that spelled out their benefits.

In the spring of 2013, the members at Land-O-Sun overwhelmingly ratified their 2nd collective bargaining agreement. The new contract, which runs through 2016, includes wage increases, improvements to discipline procedures, job assignment language, job bidding

procedure, grievance language, and wage adjustments for certain classifications and a cap on forced overtime.

The negotiating committee, led by International Representative Jim Condran, included Local 358 Financial Secretary-Treasurer Ted Constable, Chief Steward Willie Matthews and Shop Steward Wesley Moseley.

Land-O-Sun is a subsidiary of dairy giant, Dean Foods, and produces all varieties of fresh milk under private label brands. In addition to the production workers, the Local 358 bargaining unit also includes the molders who make all of the plastic milk jugs and containers for the dairy products.

The Sweet Story of Tootsie

The Tootsie Roll story began in 1896, when Austrian-born Leo Hirshfield opened a tiny candy shop in New York City. Taking full advantage of his confectioner's background, Hirshfield hand-crafted a variety of products, including an individually hand-wrapped, chewy, chocolate candy that quickly became a customer favorite.

One of the first penny candies, it affectionately was named after Hirshfield's five-year old daughter, Clara, whose nickname was "Tootsie." Tootsie Rolls propelled Hirshfield's modest corner store into burgeoning candy enterprise that has evolved in little more than a century into the multinational corporation, Tootsie Roll Industries.

Tootsie Roll Industries today produces more than 62 million Tootsie Roll candies each day, the majority produced by BCTGM Local 1 members at the company's Chicago headquarters. Building on the success of Tootsie Roll it launched Tootsie Pops, the world's number one-selling lollipop, in 1931.



Fun Tootsie Facts

- BCTGM Local 1 members produce 64 million Tootsie Rolls a day at the Chicago factory.
- Since 1970, the company has received more than 20,000 letters from children around the world who believe they have solved the mystery behind how many licks it takes to get to the center of a Tootsie
- Tootsie Pops only have five original flavors: chocolate, cherry, raspberry, orange, and grape.
- Tootsie Rolls were the first wrapped penny candy to be sold in the United States.
- Tootsie Rolls Were Added To Soldiers Field Rations During World War II because it
- could hold up to a variety of weather conditions.

BETTER IDEA : **INCREASE** Social Security & Medicare Benefits

As word spreads that lawmakers will call for Social Security and Medicare benefit cuts,

other voices are calling for increasing the successful programs instead as the medicine struggling families and a weak economy need.

A report for the New America Foundation highlights the crisis in retirement security and proposes expanding Social Security.

In a *Huffington Post* column, American Prospect co-founder and Demos Senior Fellow Robert Kuttner writes, “Social Security benefits should be increased, not cut. The share of workers with traditional pensions is down to about 15 percent. The rest either have no pensions or have 401k plans that are not pensions at all. 401k’s, like IRAs and Keoghs, are tax-sheltered savings plans. More

than half of people between 55 and 64 have no pension and no retirement plan at all other than Social Security.”

What we need is an increase in core Social Security benefits, and a second tier of Social Security as a universal, fully portable pension.

The *Washington Post*’s Ezra Klein agrees. “For years, pension experts have spoken of the “three-legged stool” of retirement savings: Social Security, employer pensions and private savings. In recent years, however, that stool has begun to wobble, and today, Social Security is basically the only leg holding it up,” writes Klein.

“It has become common in Washington

for wonks and politicians alike to lament the public’s resistance to cutting Medicare and Social Security. But that resistance is there for a reason: These programs work extraordinarily well.

“Social Security has been wildly successful at raising living standards for the elderly, even as other forms of retirement savings have grown shakier. Medicare is cheaper than private health insurance, and has seen its costs grow more slowly, to boot.

“We’ve gotten so used to thinking of our entitlement programs as problems to be solved, we’re missing all the problems they can solve,” concludes Klein.



Perez a **STRONG** Pick for Labor Secretary

President Barack Obama has nominated Tom Perez, head of the Justice Department’s Civil Rights Division, as labor secretary - a job that would give him a key role in the administration’s efforts to raise the minimum wage and reform immigration laws.

Perez’s career in public service has been dedicated to protecting Americans who face discrimination in the workplace and the voting booth, and standing up for policies that retain and create jobs.

Under his leadership, the Justice



Department’s Civil Rights Division has challenged harmful voter ID laws in South Carolina and Texas. Perez’s work thwarted the systematic attempts to block the poor, students, elderly and minorities from exercising their constitutional right to cast a ballot in the 2012 elections.

AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka notes that working men and women will be well served with Perez leading the Department of Labor. “At a time when our politics

tilts so heavily toward corporations and the very wealthy, our country needs leaders like Tom Perez to champion the cause of ordinary working people. And working families need and deserve a strong advocate as their Secretary of Labor – one who will vigorously enforce job safety standards, wage laws, and anti-discrimination rules, and who will speak out forcefully for working families and their workplace rights, including their right to join together to improve their lives and working conditions,” concludes Trumka.

The BCTGM thanks President Obama for choosing such an advocate in Perez, and congratulates him on this nomination.



Unions DRIVE UP Wages, REDUCE Poverty

While private sector union density – the proportion of workforce members who belong to a union in Canada – has declined, it is still higher than most other countries, says Ken Georgetti, president of the Canadian Labour Congress.

“And it’s also pretty close to what it was 10, 20, 30 or even 40 years ago,” Georgetti adds.

According to government statistics, union density in the private sector remains a strong 17 percent, down from 26 percent in 1984. Public sector membership has steadily increased and the overall unionization rate today is 30.2 percent, down only slightly from 33.6 in 1970.

Closely related to the decline in union density, is the rise of income inequality and poverty in Canada.

According to a report issued by the Conference Board of Canada, Canada’s high poverty rate ranks among the worst of the 17 developed countries the organization studied.

Canada’s child poverty rate is 15.1 percent, up from 12.8 percent in the mid-1990s, earning a ‘C’ ranking – only the U.S. ranked lower. Working-age poverty was 11.1 percent, up from 9.4 percent in the late 1990s – the ‘D’ ranking Canada received was the same as the U.S. and Japan.

Inequality was a major factor in Canada’s low ranking, according to the report. Canada ranked a ‘C’ on both income inequality and the gender income gap.

Many studies have pointed to the rise of income inequality in Canada over the past 30 years. The top 10 percent have seen their

average income rise 34 percent, while the bottom 10 percent have seen their earnings rise just 11 percent.

Some elements that could work towards reducing poverty in Canada include Canada’s strong economic growth and efforts to increase union density through organizing more workers into unions.

“Unions are a major force for greater income equality at the national and local level,” says Stephanie Ross, a labor expert at York University. “Through collective bargaining, they basically turn bad jobs into better jobs; into jobs that have a decent wage that can sustain a certain standard of living.”

According to Craig Riddell, a

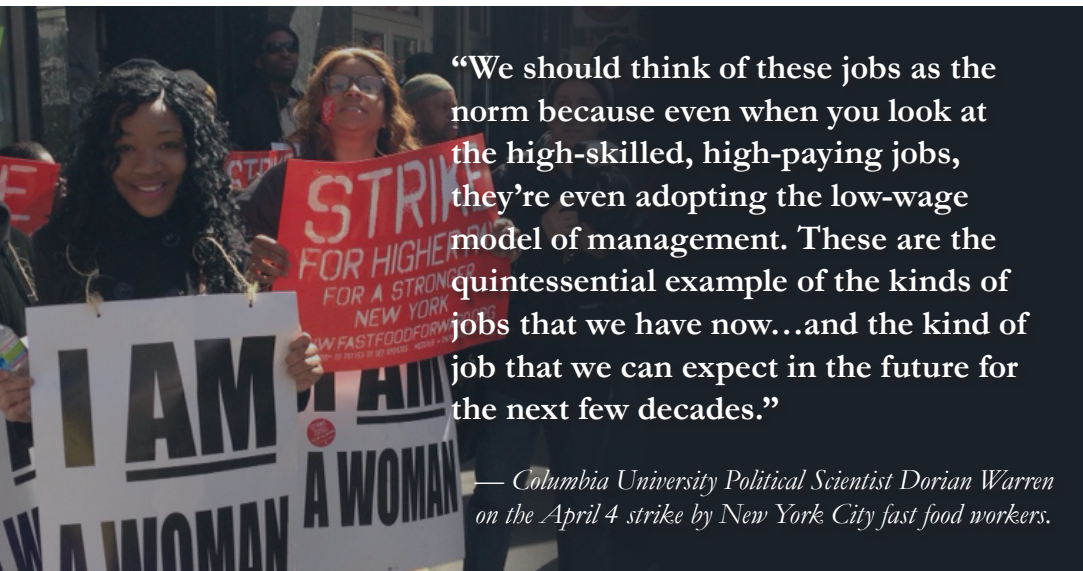
labor economist at the University of British Columbia, in recent decades, fully 20 percent of the growth in income inequality among Canadian workers can be attributed to the decline in union density. The link, he says, is particularly apparent in the private sector, where the drop-off has been most pronounced.

Study after study proves that collective bargaining agreements drive up wages throughout the entire sector, even as management strives to discourage unionization. Meanwhile, studies have shown that in industrialized nations, high union density almost always accompanies a variety of other equalizing measures, including progressive taxation and strong labor laws.

Income Inequality and Poverty

- ▶ Statistics Canada shows **one in ten** Canadians live in poverty.
- ▶ **3.2 million** Canadian workers currently live in poverty, including **634,000 children**.
- ▶ The poverty rate among children rose to **9.5 percent** in 2009 from 9.0 percent a year earlier.
- ▶ Poverty among seniors fell in 2009, to **5.2 percent** from 5.8 percent in 2008. Seniors have the lowest incidence of poverty of all the demographics, according Statistics Canada.
- ▶ **Seven out of 10** part-time workers in Canada are women. Women are more likely to hold multiple part-time jobs.
- ▶ Poverty follows women into their retirement: women 65 or over are **twice as likely as men** to be low income.
- ▶ **49%** of Canadians feel they are one or two pay checks away from being poor.
- ▶ **\$201,400**: The entry point to become one of Canada’s richest 1% of income earners. In other words, if you make more than \$201,400 you earn more than 99% of Canadian income earners.
- ▶ **0**: The number of provinces in Canada that reduced income inequality since 1982.

NOTABLE *Quotes*



“We should think of these jobs as the norm because even when you look at the high-skilled, high-paying jobs, they’re even adopting the low-wage model of management. These are the quintessential example of the kinds of jobs that we have now...and the kind of job that we can expect in the future for the next few decades.”

— Columbia University Political Scientist Dorian Warren on the April 4 strike by New York City fast food workers.

“The old trick of blaming the needy for their need doesn’t seem to play the way it used to, and especially not on health care.”

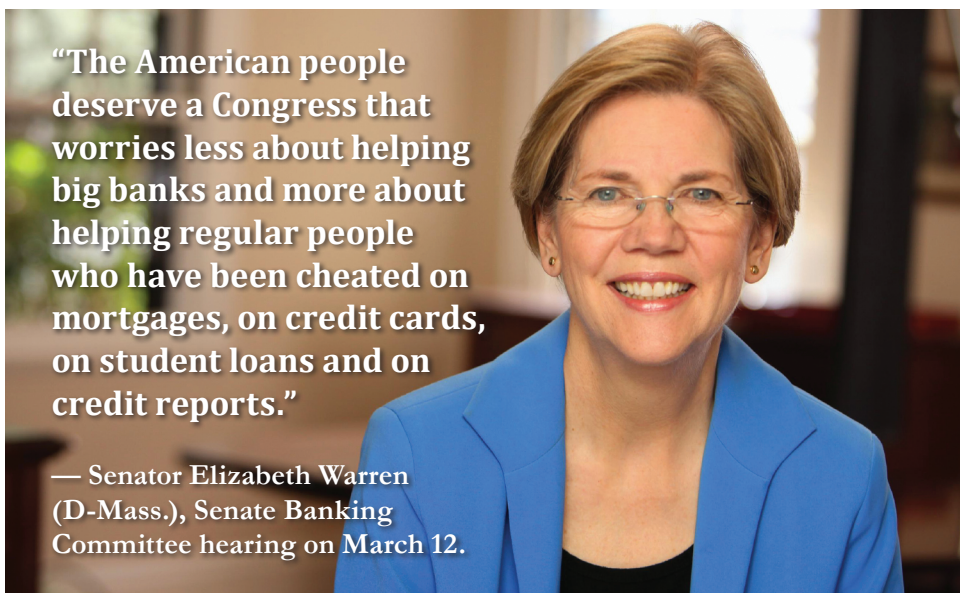
— New York Times Op-Ed columnist Paul Krugman, in April 8 column, “Insurance and Freedom.”

“I can’t possibly know the reality of the day-to-day struggles faced by people living on minimum wage, which is currently \$7.25/hour. But as H.F. 92 is considered by my fellow lawmakers, this is an attempt to better understand an economic situation most of us have never been exposed to.”

— Minnesota State Rep. Jason Metsa (D) accepted Working America’s challenge to live on Minnesota’s current minimum wage for five days as legislation to raise the state’s minimum wage to \$9.95 makes its way through the state legislature.

“It did feel a bit like a needle stuck on a broken record, or that maybe he had ... his iPod earbuds in his ear during lunch last week with the president.”

— Democratic National Committee Chairwoman Debbie Wasserman Schultz, criticizing Rep. Paul Ryan for attempting to use his budget plan to reverse the president’s health care law (Politico.com, March 12)



“The American people deserve a Congress that worries less about helping big banks and more about helping regular people who have been cheated on mortgages, on credit cards, on student loans and on credit reports.”

— Senator Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.), Senate Banking Committee hearing on March 12.

DREAMING OF DISNEY WORLD?

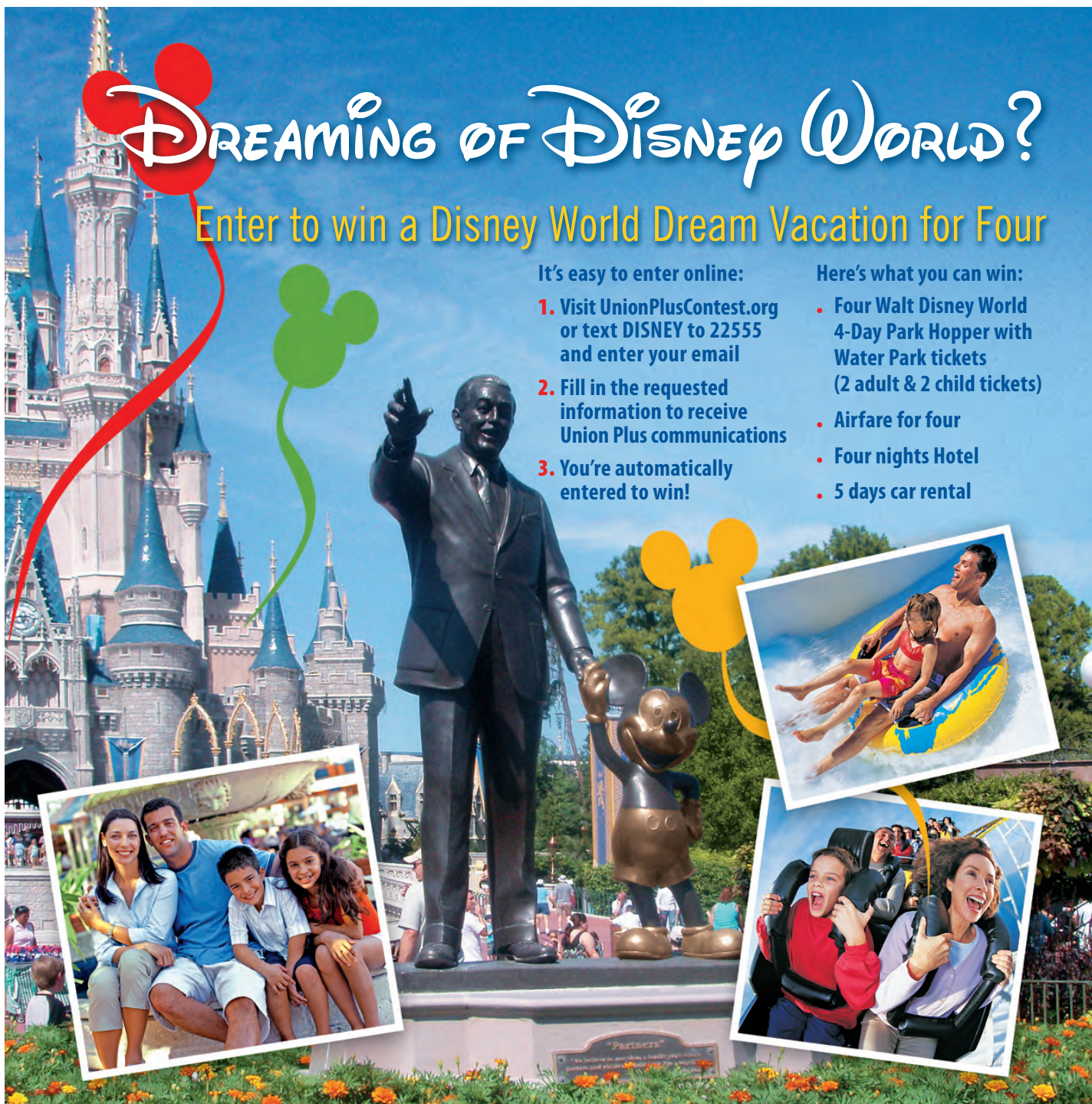
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TELL CONGRESS: CANCEL THE CUTS

REPEAL SEQUESTRATION

“SEQUESTRATION:
a fancy word for
a dumb idea.”

– AFL-CIO President
Richard Trumka

A cross-the-board budget cuts – called sequestration – will cost more than ONE MILLION jobs this year and many more jobs over the next decade. There is a simple solution to make this problem go away: repeal sequestration. It is that simple.

Republicans are using sequestration as leverage to get their way in congress. They want to cut Social Security, Medicaid and Medicare benefits and gut essential services working people depend on, while protecting tax breaks for Wall Street and the richest TWO PERCENT of Americans.

The solution is to repeal sequestration – not replace it – so we can put these manufactured crises behind us and focus on the urgent problems of putting America back to work, raising wages and reducing economic inequality.

CALL YOUR MEMBERS OF CONGRESS NOW AT

888-659-9401

and tell them to **REPEAL SEQUESTRATION**

